



CONTACT

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***South Branch
Reformed Church***

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@SBRChurch



sbrchurch

FROM THE PASTOR

We were taught in kindergarten that April showers bring May flowers! What they didn't teach us is that April showers also bring watery & scratchy eyes, stuffy noses, and fuzzy minds all due to the increase of pollen in the air. Some of us will just "suffer through it" and others will quickly turn to allergy medications to help ease the symptoms. Either way, it is still beautiful to see God's creation springing back to life and filling our yards and church grounds with some color following the winter months.



As we ease into May, the excitement is building for the 175th Anniversary Celebration! We will gather on Sunday, May 18th at 2:00 PM in the Sanctuary for a service of worship and praise for all that God has done and continues to do! I am excited to welcome the Rev. Dr. Micah McCreary as our guest preacher for this service. Dr. McCreary is the President of New Brunswick Theological Seminary and he is an amazing preacher (as well as a personal friend)! We will also welcome some special guests: Rev. Roger Krutz (Pastor of SBRC from 1994 to 2001), Rev. Eddy Aléman (General Secretary of the RCA), and others.



Following the service, we will gather at the Somerville Elks at 4:00 PM for a dinner to celebrate our 175th Anniversary as a church family with our invited guests. It is sure to be a wonderful day of remembering our past, celebrating our present, and sharing hope for the future of SBRC with God's help and guidance.

One of the hopes of the 175th and Property Committees was to have the steeple re-painted in time for the Anniversary service. Mother Nature, however, had other plans when it came to weather and that has pushed back the plans. We are hoping that the work will be done in June or July of this year. A minor setback, but let's remember that the whole of 2025 is our year to celebrate!

Even as we celebrate, we also must remain prepared and at the ready for the start of hurricane season! Part of our preparation is practicing the deployment and use of the flood wall. A Flood Wall Drill has been scheduled for Saturday, June 14th. More information is provided in this newsletter and in the Sunday bulletin.

See you in worship & fellowship!



Pastor [Signature]

May Birthdays:

- 2 Karen Messineo
- 7 Danielle Marshall
- 9 Jillian Burt
Giovanni Franco
- 10 Dan Davenport
- 11 Marc Gulla
Kirsten Stockman
- 12 Cade Zeban
- 14 Thomas Marshall
- 20 Aiden Stabile
Ryan Stabile
- 24 Rich Norz
- 29 Michael Murray



May Anniversaries

- 2 Dominick & Karen
Abbatiello
- 16 Tom & Beth
Bernard
- 19 William & Carmen
Munro
- 26 Joe & Irene
Foley
- 29 John & Kim
Colaiacovo

TREASURER’S NOTES

I can tell spring has arrived, with my itchy eyes and drippy nose. But I still love this season. It is a time of renewal as we witness God’s creation come to life in all its glory with dazzling colors and sweet melodies from chirping birds. It is truly breath taking. It is also impressive to witness the excitement as we await the celebration of the 175th anniversary of your church here at South Branch. Thanks to the support of our members, we have completed many projects to beautify the building and grounds in preparation for this special event.



However, we still must address the day-to-day operations of the church. March was a good month financially. Pledges totaled over \$14,000. We received \$3,300 from our members in classis dues. The corn beef dinner made a profit of \$2,149. Our receipts totaled an amazing \$24,744. Unfortunately, we started March \$4,949 in the red. Besides our regular expenses, we had to pay out and additional \$10,600 to cover several large quarterly payments that were due. Sadly, we ended the month \$4,975 in the red.

But this is South Branch. We may be down temporarily, but we are not defeated. Soon the church will be filled by our members and their families as well as those from the community to celebrate Easter and the resurrection of our lord. As stated earlier, this is the season of renewal. And we will bounce back and get our current expense budget into the black.



May God continue to bless SBRC and its people.

~ Robyn Friedlander

FLOOD WALL DRILL

On Saturday, June 14th, SBRC will hold a “Flood Wall Drill”. Hurricane Season is from June 1st to November 30th and the forecast for the 2025 Hurricane Season is: 20 Named Storms (14 is the average) with 10 Hurricanes (7 is the average) with 5 Hurricanes between at a Category 3 or greater (3 is the average). The potential for a very active & stormy Hurricane Season is pretty high. We NEED to be ready.



The Drill will be a time for those already trained to be re-acquaint with the materials & refined our skills. Also, it is an opportunity to teach those who were not able to go through the initial training.

The importance of this drill cannot be overstated! We will need all available hands to participate, practice, and learn so that our mitigation efforts are not in vain. Please make every effort to join us on June 14th! Please watch for more information in the June newsletter & in the Sunday bulletins.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

The Sunday School is rolling through the month of April. Classes resumed on April 27th following a short break for Easter celebrations.

We had a busy morning on Palm Sunday, April 13. The students started their morning with a Palm Parade during the first hymn before heading down to the kitchen to make pretzels, led by Patti Kletz. While the pretzels were baking, they participated in some Easter activities. Following Coffee Hour, 17 children proceeded out to the playground for our annual Easter Egg Hunt. A fun time was had by all. Thank you to the congregation for their candy donations and for helping stuff the eggs.

On Sunday, May 11th the students will participate in a Mother’s Day activity. We are in the process of gathering supplies, please let your children’s teacher know if they will be unable to attend.

Believe it or not our school year is already winding down. Plans are in the works for our Summer Kick-Off Carnival and Ice Cream Social, set for June 1st to celebrate another great year of Sunday School. The children will begin in Church and following the year-end ceremony will head out for some fun. Younger siblings (and Grandchildren) are welcome and encouraged to attend!

We are also planning for our next school year and are always looking for volunteers. Please reach out to me if you are interested in teaching, co-teaching, or substituting.

- Tracy Davenport



Summer Kick-Off Carnival & Ice Cream Social

Sunday, June 1
Following the Children’s Sermon – 12 PM



BOOK CLUB

The Book Club started in January 2015 and has been meeting monthly. Meetings are held over Zoom so that those out of state can participate in the discussion. The May gathering will mark the 101st book that the group has read and discussed!!

On May 25th, the group will discuss “A Fire Sparkling” by Julianne Maclean at 8:00 PM via Zoom. Consider picking up a copy and joining in the discussion!



Summer Reading List:

- June - “The Wedding People” by Alison Aspach
- July - “Iona Iverson’s Rules for Commuting” by Clare Pooley
- August - “The Wishing Game” by Meg Shaffer
- September - “The Dead Romantics” by Ashley Poston

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR MAY

May 4:

- Acts 9:1-20
- Psalm 30
- Revelation 5:11-14
- John 21:1-19

May 11:

- Acts 9:36-43
- Psalm 23
- Revelation 7:9-17
- John 10:22-30

May 18:

- Acts 11:1-18
- Psalm 148
- Revelation 21:1-6
- John 13:31-35

May 25:

- Acts 16:9-15
- Psalm 67
- Revelation 21:10,22-22:5
- John 5:1-9



MANY THANKS....

As we look over the past few months, it is important that we take some time to offer thanks to some members & friends who have gone the extra mile to help SBRC!



Thank you to Tyson Stramaglia, his kitchen crew, and to everyone who has stepped up to help/donate! These dinners are a success because of all your hard work!

Thank you to Holly Kowalenko for leading the tradition of gathering two community dinners to families in our community. We were able to make the holidays special for these families and it is all due to the generosity of our members!

Thank you to Emily Muller & Patti Kletz for an amazing Talent Auction this year! It was great to see it return to SBRC and it raised over \$6,000 for the Church.

Thank you to those on the 175th Anniversary Committee! You have been working hard for over a year to help make this milestone a wonderful celebration.

Thank you to Tom & Patti Kletz for having the church entrance & columns cleaned & painted. Also, thank you to Jim & Hedily Wendover for painting areas inside the Sanctuary. It is looking great as we get ready to celebrate the 175th Anniversary!

Finally, thank you to the membership of SBRC! We are a congregation that seeks to love one another and those in our community. You're continued dedication to the Church and our shared ministry is a beacon of light to those around us.

NEW GRADUATES?



Do you know of anyone in our church family who is graduating this spring from grade school, high school, college, graduate school, etc.?

If so, please complete the form below and return it to the church office or email the information to newsletter@sbrchurch.org. We would like to print our congratulations in the June issue of the **Contact**.

_____ graduate(s)(d) from _____ on _____.
Name School, Degree, etc. Date

Additional Info. (daughter/son of, etc.): _____

_____ graduate(s)(d) from _____ on _____.
Name School, Degree, etc. Date

Additional Info. (daughter/son of, etc.): _____

_____ graduate(s)(d) from _____ on _____.
Name School, Degree, etc. Date

Additional Info. (daughter/son of, etc.): _____

May 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	2	3 Spring Clean Up at 9:00am
4 Communion SVP at 5pm in Fireside Room	5 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	6 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	7	8 Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	9	10
11	12 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	13 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	14 Knit, Pray, Crochet at 7pm at Stockman home SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	15 Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	16 June Newsletter items due!!	17
18 175th Anniversary Service at 2pm 175th Anniversary Dinner at Somerville Elks at 4pm	19 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	20 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	21 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room Consistory at 7:30pm in Parlor	22 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	23	24
25 Book Club at 8pm via Zoom	26	27 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	28 Knit, Pray, Crochet at 7pm at Stockman home SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room	29 SVP at 7pm in Fireside Room Choir at 7:30pm in Parlor	30	31

South Branch Reformed Church
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Live & Love Like Jesus

Rev. Stephen Eckert ~ Pastor
Mr. John Colaiacovo ~ Music Director
Mrs. Karen Abbatiello ~ Church Secretary
Mrs. Jennifer Feaster ~ Preschool Director
Mrs. Maritza Acosta ~ Sexton

Spring Clean-Up at SBRC!

Join us on Saturday, May 3rd at 9:00am at SBRC for a “Spring Clean-Up”!

Work to be done outside the Church: gardening, landscaping, power washing, and more. At the same time,

there are things inside the Sanctuary that need attention and cleaning.



The 175th Anniversary Celebration is quickly approaching and we need to get some things “spruced up” in and around the Church as we welcome members, friends, and invited guests to help us celebrate this milestone!

Come out and help us put the finishing touches in and around SBRC! All help is greatly appreciated and many hands makes for light work!